A Dictionary G-S (1929-47) 1951 Vol I Kuwait
Revisions 1954

only thing Little Barrak comes up
576 to Amsha's side and cuddles up in her arms. She loves him almost more than her own daughter. She kisses him and fondles him, and allows him to put his head on her shoulder and gaze up at me with wide eyes. Amsha is pathetically fond of her two slave children. They are only five and three respectively. Such love and such tenderness would make the brains of those busybodies whirl, who talk so glibly of the cruelty and horrors of the slave problem. How is it done? The answer is simple. These babies, the sons of her stalwart slave, 'Abdullah* (brought originally from Russia and married to a freed 'Ajman slave woman), call out every womanly instinct in Amsha. They are the offspring of her own property. They are hers to prize and cherish. She even opens up her gown† and offers her breast to little Barrak who is fidgeting somewhat. "There, keep quiet, ya *habaiba* (little sweet one), will you," she says, "and let us hear news from Abu Sa'ud."

272 415 Presently Salim comes back again with the coffee-pot, and the special cups which he has brought back from Riyadh, little white and yellow-ochre ones, unknown among the people of Kuwait. With pride he once again offers me coffee. "The cups? Oh yes, they are from Riyadh. I brought them back for Um Sa'ud (my *wife*), when she returns from England." "The year has been a good one, *Al hamdu 'l Illah*," he proceeds. "The camels are fat and their humps are so round you wouldn't recognise them." "Nay, Abu Sa'ud", chimes in Amsha, "you would not know Farha except for her nose ring. She has such a big hump now that a saddle cannot be put on her. And congratulate us, thirty-six lambs have been born in the last ten days, and Zahra's (my daughter's) brown ewe which was a baby two years ago has had her first lamb also, her first-born, so sweet and soft. Run and fetch it, ya Hussa." The lamb is produced and much admired. Its wee tail is duly weighed in my hand to see if it has got any fat on it. "And now you must come and see our baby camel", and away I am taken by the womenfolk to the back of the tent where a dozen she-camels are standing. They have just come in from water, and are waiting to be milked and bedded down for the night. The baby-camel is next caught and brought to me. It is wonderfully tame, and holds

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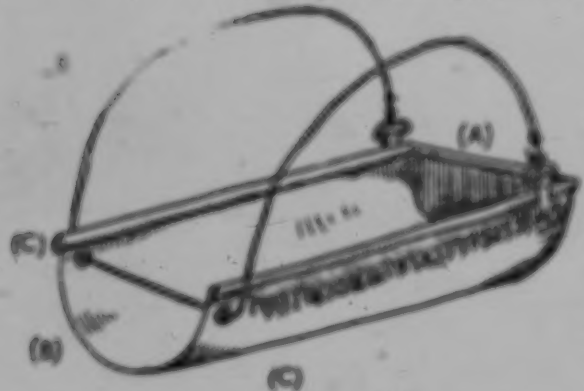
* He died the following year (1935) after returning sick from Mecca.

† If an Arab woman suckles her little slave child, that child can never be sold as a slave. It is henceforth free and her own.

HAUDH

HABÁBA (child's hammock slung inside tent)

(child's portable cradle, common to the tribes)



a. Head, with decoration on outside.
b. Foot.
c. The holes through which passes a running rope that closes the cradle at foot when it is lifted.

(C)

(A)

Outside decoration of A

[538]

492. treasures, her baby, etc., in a sort of comfortable cot. On the saddle itself is placed the woman's bedding, and hanging down on either side are her saddle-bags (*wiṣdwal*). The *mahsur* is always made of pomegranate wood, as this can be bent into the necessary hoop shapes. Various patterns and variations of the *mahsur* are used by different tribes.

[515] *Sakára*—the woman's treasure box, containing her coffee, cardamom, saffron, tea, sugar, dyes, jewellery, trinkets, etc., etc.

Akbab (plural: *'aiyab*)—leather saddle-bags for storing dates.

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Women's Treasures

Chap. V

Miḳdwal—coloured saddle-bags for storing women's clothes, spare garments, coloured wools, etc. These are separate and hang on hooks on either side of the *maksar*, whereas men's saddle-bags are joined together and hang over the top of the saddle. The *miḳdwal*'s bag-tassels are half as long as those adorning men's saddle-bags. 415 492

'Adúl—large woollen saddle-bags for carrying rice, flour, sugar, etc.

Lahâf—cotton quilts, usually red.

Fihr—a volcanic stone resembling an ox-tongue in shape. Hard and black, used as a hammer for knocking in tent pegs.

Mirjahah—wooden tripod 4 ft. high, on which the skin is slung when making *leben*, or the carcase of a sheep which is to be skinned.

Samîl (plural: *samlan*)—special skin for making *leben*, always a sheepskin.

Mukrash—bladder for storing butter, known as *masrab* by the 'Awazim.

Jirba (plural: *garab*)—Goatskin for carrying water.

Râwi (plural: *ruwi*)—Camelskin for carrying water. (Known as *miḳdda* among the 'Ajman.)

Mahjan—wooden funnel for putting milk into skins

Jerâb—Bag made from skin of baby gazelle with a pattern on it in coloured dyes, used for carrying coffee in on the march.

Mattârih—hand loom (also *nattu*).

Misha—shuttle.

Natha—flat wooden piece for tightening threads.

Middrah—gazelle's horn for pulling down threads.

Maghzal or *Mubbrah*—spindle.

Sarâr—The pair of sticks 8 inches long used to tie up the udders of a she-camel, e.g. *saru al naja* (an order indicating that the camel's teats should be tied up). Each stick is laid alongside two udders, and each udder is tied separately with a piece of woollen thread. This is to prevent calves drinking. Calves are only allowed to drink morning and evening. The camel has four udders. 233

Birîḳ (pronounced *brick*) and *Maghassal*—jug and basin (used only among *hadhar* or townsmen).

Al Haudh—a leather basin for watering sheep and camels. Three bent pieces of wood form the stand.

Al Dallu—small leather bucket (two kinds) used for drawing water from wells.

Miḳbah—Child's portable cradle, common to the tribes of Hasa. It is carried on the mother's back supported by thongs across her forehead, or else carried under her arm supported by thongs over the shoulder, according to which tribe she belongs to. The *miḳbah* is made out of one piece of leather. As the cradle is lifted the end where the child's feet lie is automatically closed by the running rope which passes through two holes one at each side (see diagram). The *miḳbah* is not 864

Skin Containers

854 used by the northern Badawin of Arabia, who carry their children on their shoulders or, when travelling, on their hips. The *miẓbah* is not to be confused with the *habába*.

Habába—Baby's hammock for use inside tent. It is slung between two tent poles. Especially favoured in the north.

262 *Hail*—cardamum seeds for putting in coffee.

Masmár—cloves, for putting in coffee.

Záfáran—saffron, for putting in tea and coffee.

492 *Shinkar*—hooks on each side of the *maksar* to hang women's saddle-bags on.

THE LOOM—MATTÁRIH, NATTU OR SADÍ

286 The loom gear consists of seven pieces which altogether are known as *mattárih*.

(1) Piece of wood known as *ga'ah*.
(2) Shuttle known as *misha*.
(3) Tightener known as *mishiẓẓa*.
(4) Piece of wood holding up threads known as *minyar*.
(5) Circular wooden supports of *minyar*, known as *marakib*.
(6) Piece of wood holding ends of threads known as *al ras*.
(7) Gazelle horn for pulling down threads known as *middrah*.

SKIN CONTAINERS

415 These consist of:

(*a*) Water skins.
(*b*) Skin bags for storing *dehen*, coffee beans, dates, etc.

Under (*a*) we get the *ráwi*, the *thilaithi*, *minún* and common *qirba* (*jirba*).

Ráwi is the generic term for a water receptacle made out of a camel's skin.

Thilaithi is the name given to a water receptacle made out of one half of a camel skin doubled over and sewn together.

Minún is a gigantic water receptacle made out of the two side skins of a camel sewn together. They are always very water-tight.

Qirba is an ordinary water skin made out of a whole sheep's or goat's skin which is peeled off the animal. The best and most lasting are made from goats' skins (males) and cost in the rough about Rs.2/8 each. Sheepskins do not last.

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Muntafiq

Latífa
Lulua
Mahara
Maneira
Mastura
Maziuna
Múdhi
Mumni
Nassara
Naufa
Nejela
Nejma
Núra
Nuríyah
Radífa
Sa'ada
Sabícha
Sanwa
Shagha—['Ajman] Janaifer's granddaughter
Shaikha
Sidha
Síta—('Ajman)
Sukort
Tufala
Ubdida
Wadha
Wasmíyah
Zahwa—[Shammar]

UPBRINGING OF BABIES

The birth of a Badawin baby is attended with as little fuss as the birth of a baby-camel. The infant is first and foremost bathed in a female camel's urine. As soon as possible afterwards, its eyes are rubbed over with antimony, to make them strong. All day long the baby is kept wrapped up in swaddling clothes, the arms being folded across the chest and bound there, and the legs tied close together at the knees and ankles. Before being swaddled the baby is laid flat on a square piece of black cloth covered with dry, powdered camel dung (formed into a dust). The baby is then wrapped up, and a little piece of black cloth is wound round its head to be replaced when it is about a month old by a cap which comes right down over both ears. 846

When the baby is being nursed, it is invariably placed on a circular piece of leather (*nattah*). 853

When the mother moves about on her various duties, or if cutting brushwood, she carries her baby slung across her back in a leather hammock (*miṛbádh*)*, the end-thongs of which are either passed round her forehead, or more often over one shoulder, the baby hanging down under her arm for warmth. On the march, the baby and hammock are placed with the mother in the *maksar* (or woman's litter). 864

When the child is a few months old it is often slung in one of the

* Only 'Ajman, Bani Hajir, Bani Khalid, 'Awazim, Zaab, Murra, Manasir, Muntafiq ('Ajwad) do this. Other tribes do not carry babies in leather hammocks.

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854 saddle bags with its head out. After this age the baby is practically never washed; and it is taken out of its swaddling clothes only at night and then for only short periods.

The idea underlying the swaddling clothes is firstly, to keep the baby quiet, and secondly, to make it grow strong and straight.

853 The baby is fed at any hour of the day and night, or whenever it cries. It is not immodest for a Badawin woman to feed her baby in

Nattah.

the presence of her menfolk, or even of strange men; and I have often seen women to whom I have been talking, open their front garment and bring out a breast to suckle their infant.

BADAWIN NAMES

103 552 The Badawin frequently name men and places after parts of the human body. Some of the best-known examples are given below.

Places.

Al Sirra—"The Navel"; a hill near Kuwait.

Al Diúd—"The woman's breasts"; a hill in the Neutral Zone south of Kuwait.

Al Nuhaidain—"The maiden's breasts"; two small twin hills in Kuwait.

Kashm al Afri—"The gazelle's nose"; a hill 40 miles north-west of Kuwait.

Dhala'at al Dhaba—"The Hyena's Mounds"; a group of low hills 25 miles south-west of Kuwait.

561 *Men.*

Zib Sahman—"Dog's penis"; cognomen of Khalid al Hithlain, present Shaikh of the 'Ajman.

Ab 'al Kilab—"Father of Dogs"; cognomen given to Naif al Hithlain, late Shaikh of the 'Ajman.

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Good-looking Shepherd Girls

tussle with them in the old war days when I held charge of the Suq al Shuyukh and Nasriyah areas. All are good fighters and of tough breed, and all carry the very latest type of rifle or carbine with an abundance of ammunition.

The shepherd tribes leave the Euphrates about the 15th October of each year, and provided early rains (*wasm*) have fallen in the southern desert, move slowly south grazing on the new green shoots and drinking from rain pools or *khabras* which, owing to the rock formation of the subsoil almost everywhere in North-East Arabia, sometimes lie for weeks before drying up.

During February and March the shepherd tribes cover the whole of the area lying to the south and west of Kuwait, and quite one of the pleasantest features of Kuwait life at this time of the year is to meet the large number of pretty shepherd lasses who are to be seen laughing happily and wending their way along the roads which converge on to the town.

These girls are usually accompanied by droves of small donkeys laden to the ground with curdled milk in skins, wool and firewood which they bring into Kuwait to sell, or again in the evening taking home their daily purchases of food, brightly coloured cloth, etc.

They are a very happy community and as a rule prefer to travel without their men folk, who stay with the tents or tend the flocks.

These *Hukra* lasses, as they are locally called, all go unveiled in contrast to the Kuwait Badawin women. Being for the most part pretty and good looking, they usually have a crowd of town youths buzzing round the spot where they congregate to sell their wares. Like most of their sisters nearer home, they can drive the shrewdest of bargains, and give as good as they get in verbal exchanges.

The women with babies either carry them on their backs on the march, or tuck them into a saddle-bag thrown across a donkey's back. The wee faces peering out just above the edge of the roomy bag are a most comical sight.

In general appearance these shepherd girls, like their men folk, are strong and lusty, and rarely ride their donkeys. They walk twelve to fifteen miles a day when visiting Kuwait, and on the same day in the evening return some six or seven miles out of the town, sleep on the side of the road when dark falls, and at dawn continue their